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Work hard play hard: Many people today work longer hours than medieval peasants, experts think.

Was medieval life better? What do you think life was like in the Middle Ages? Not very good? Now some people say it might be better than today.

What's happening?

Cold houses. Tasteless food. Human waste thrown out of windows into the street. The **Black Death** making everyone afraid of coughs and illnesses.

This is what most people imagine when they think about the **Middle Ages**. But now, some people on social media say they think life was better in the past.

Find out more

Some claim that medieval **peasants** worked only about 150 days of every year. Today, Britons work for about 260 days every year. One survey even found that British people think about leaving

their job 16 times per year.

Some say that modern life has become too modern. They think we are too overworked and too online.

In the past, they say, farming life met people's needs and made them happy. Work was not all about making money.

But others say that they are forgetting the bad parts of the past. The Black Death wiped out one third of the people in Europe. Some people had very hard lives. Fewer people had the chance to go to school, travel the world or meet interesting people.

Was medieval life better?

Some say

Yes! They ate natural foods, spent more time in the fresh air and knew all of their neighbours. To the modern person, that sounds like a good life!

Others think

No! Imagine the world without the internet, medicines that work and modern-day foods. Also, lots of people could not read or write then. Today is clearly better!

Some people say

"We owe to the Middle Ages the two worst inventions of humanity – romantic love and gunpowder."

André Maurois (1885 – 1967), French author

What do you think?

Six steps to discovery

1. Connect

How do you feel about this story? - Do you wish you lived in the Middle Ages?

2. Wonder

What questions do you have? - For example: What was your town like in the Middle Ages?

3. Investigate

What are the facts? - Pick out one thing we know for certain and one thing we cannot say for sure from this story.

4. Construct

What is your point of view? - Imagine that you could travel back in time to any time in history. What time will you choose and why?

5. Express

What do others believe? - Do you think life would have been better in medieval times? Discuss as a class.

6. Reflect

What might happen next? - Imagine that you have time travelled to the Middle Ages. Write down what you see around you.

Glossary

Black Death - A bacterial infection that killed as much as 60% of the population of Europe and 33% of the Middle Eastern population.

Middle Ages - The Middle Ages was the period in European history that came between ancient and modern times. It lasted from about 500 to about 1500.

Peasants - A historical term often used to describe poorer people who worked in farming.